

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0094] ~~A method and apparatus for implementing heterogeneous connections on a bi-directional line switched ring.~~ In one embodiment of the invention, a network element is to be coupled to a first and second span of a number of spans that interconnect a set of network elements to form a ring network. In addition, each of the spans has two sub-spans on which traffic travels in opposite directions on a number of channels that circumvent the ring. Additionally, the channels on each sub-span include working channels and protecting channels. Furthermore, the network element includes a traffic handler to reprogram, responsive to protection switches and un-switches, the connection configuration on the protecting channels of the sub-spans of the first and second spans that provide traffic to the network element

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